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Donovan Back to U. S. to Await Castro's Decision on Prisoners

MIAMI, Oct. 11 (AP)—James B. Donovan returned to Miami today and said he was awaiting Premier Fidel Castro's decision whether to accept an offer of medicine, drugs, and baby foods to release the 1,113 Cubans captured in last year's invasion.

"I am always optimistic," the New York attorney said when asked if he thought Dr. Castro would liberate the prisoners.

Mr. Donovan said his offer consisted solely of "medicine, drugs, medical supplies and infant foods, designed as an offer of the American people to the Cuban people."

"No money is involved," Mr. Donovan emphasized.

He said: "Before I entered the picture, the Cuban Families Committee [for the Liberation of Prisoners of War] had undertaken certain obligations. My work does not involve any of these in infringe upon them."

Mr. Donovan said his intention no was "simply to wait for a final resolution by the Cuban Government."

The lawyer said he expected to stay in the Miami area for the next day or so. He said he had a secondary infection in a bursitis condition and would receive medical attention while here.

Mr. Donovan said the families committee had spent the last nine months gathering funds. He said the committee could accept cash and other gifts that would be deductible under federal tax regulations.

He added that funds had been collected from many sources and have been pulled together in Miami.

U. S. Role Is Denied

Mr. Donovan said firmly "the U. S. Government has absolutely no part in these negotiations."

(It was reported from Washington yesterday that the United States was understood to be playing a considerable though unacknowledged role in the negotiations and was prepared to help pay the ransom for the prisoners.)

Mr. Donovan's attempts to gain the freedom of the invasion prisoners were understood to have encountered difficulties last night in a four-hour meeting in the Presidential Palace in Havana.

After the meeting, a spokesman for the Cuban families Committee said two or three more meetings would be necessary to revise certain points.

Leaders of the Cuban Refugee Community in Miami expressed the hope that an announcement by Alpha 66, an exile organization of a raid Monday on the Cuban port of Isabela de Sagua had not disrupted the negotiations.

The committee officials also expressed doubt the raid had taken place.

U.S. Doubts Report of Raid

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 11 — Government sources cast doubt today on the report of a Cuban exile group, Alpha 66, that it had raided a Cuban port Monday and killed 20 defenders, including some Russians.

The State Department said it had no information or evidence that such a raid had taken place or that any commando group of exiles had used United States territory as a staging area for such a raid. Other sources said the reports were being investigated.

Officials here were plainly embarrassed, however, that the Cuban exiles, with headquarters in Puerto Rico and representatives in Miami and New York, were boasting openly of defiance of United States laws and agreements barring armed attacks on other nations. But suggestions to reprimand and warn the exiles apparently were deferred until the Justice Department completed a special study of the organization, its members and activities.

The raid on Isabela de Sagua, a port about 150 miles east of Havana, was announced yesterday by Alpha 66.

The same group said it had attacked one British and two Cuban vessels off Cuba's northern coast Sept. 10. Today, press associations reported from San Juan that a man describing himself as the group's leader had threatened additional attacks on all vessels carrying supplies to Cuba.

Both at the State and Justice Departments, officials deplored the private warfare, but there was no official statement to this effect by any Government agency. The activities of Alpha 66, it was said, were plainly illegal if conducted from United States territory and, in any case, in defiance of established Government policy.

The Administration, though committed to work for a "change of the regime" in Cuba, has thus far resisted demands for open and armed intervention.

At the White House, Pierre Salinger, the press secretary,

but his comment was directed primarily at inquiries about negotiations for the ransom of 1,113 prisoners taken last year in an unsuccessful invasion of the island.

Philip M. Martin, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, said that the Government's official position was that James B. Donovan was acting only as counsel for the Cuban Families Committee for the Liberation of Prisoners of War.

Mr. Martin said the Government had no objections to the ransom of the prisoners for money or medicine, but that beyond this it was a matter between the committee and the Cuban Government.

There have been other indications here, however, that the Federal Government has been taking a great and possibly controlling interest in the negotiations and that it may even be prepared to help raise the ransom funds if private contributions prove insufficient.

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